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## V CORPS' 22ND SIGNAL BRIGADE MOURNS DEATH OF STAR SOLDIER

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**DARMSTADT, Germany** – The Cambrai Fritsch-Kaserne chapel here wasn't big enough to hold the outpouring of grief when more than 400 mourners gathered to remember 22-year-old Cpl. Jacques F. Kessler of V corps' 22nd Signal Brigade October 28.

Friends, Boy Scouts, and fellow Soldiers were among the standing-room-only crowd at a memorial service in Kessler's honor. The corporal was found dead in his barracks room here October 25 of unknown causes. The incident is still under investigation.

"It was amazing to see how many people he knew, and how many lives he had touched," said Capt. Robert Strack, commander of Company C, 440th Signal Battalion.

"He was full of energy and full of life, and that's what drew people to him," said Cpl. James B. Ridings, "He was always truly concerned about others, and never turned a blind eye to someone who really needed him."

Friends and commanders unequivocally described a model Soldier so full of life and optimism that constantly served as motivation and inspiration to those around him.

"Regardless of what was happening around him, Kessler's upbeat and positive attitude toward life rubbed off on those around him. He was such a huge source of the unit's morale and camaraderie. No matter what task you threw in front of him, he always took it all in stride and made it look so easy. And he succeeded every time," said Strack.

"Kessler always had a smile on his face," said Lt. Col. Edwin M. Drose, 440th Signal Battalion commander. "He was always ready to do anything you asked of him. No matter what, he took everything in stride and was able to smile about it."

Kessler served as the president of Darmstadt's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program. Shortly before his death, his program was recognized both by U.S. Army Europe and the Department of the Army for excellence in its class.

"Cpl. Kessler's work with the BOSS program showed us all again his incredibly selfless nature. He always took the time to volunteer for anything that would benefit those around him. It was a testament to his true nature. A true soldier serving soldiers," said Strack.

Kessler's constant outreach to people from all walks of life was reflected in the diversity of the mourners. He was also active in the Scouting community and German KONTAKT club.

"Kessler made great contributions of his own time and energy to make the Darmstadt community a better place to live. He was an Eagle Scout. He worked tirelessly to improve our MWR paintball facility and worked with the German Special Olympics," said Drose.

"Cpl. Jacques Kessler was an outstanding Soldier, but more importantly, he was a friend to all," said Strack.

"Our hearts have a hole in them that will never be filled," said Mary Beth Turner, a BOSS adviser and close friend. "He was an older brother to my children and a child that I watched out for. I'd like to think that even though he has left us but for a short time, he has already earned his wings, and they are golden. Rest well, Jacques. You have touched the hearts and minds of many. I love you."

